

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 L-03 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 MMS-03

PRS-01 PA-04 USIA-15 DRC-01 /123 W

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R 191200Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1597

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4481

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH, XO

SUBJECT: THAI INTEREST IN THE U.S. MILITARY ROLE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

REF: BANGKOK 4395 (NOTAL)

1. CHAO SAICHEUA, CHIEF OF THE AMERICA DIVISION OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA), CALLED IN THE POLITICAL COUNSELLOR MARCH 19. CHAO EXHIBITED A MARCH 15 ARTICLE FROM THE NATION HEADLINED "THAI-BASED B-52'S MAY FLY INDIAN OCEAN PATROLS." HE ASKED WHETHER IT WAS THE U.S. INTENTION TO FLY B-52 SURVEILLANCE MISSIONS OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN OUT OF UTAPAO.

2. THE ANSWER WAS NO, WITH THE FURTHER ELABORATION THAT B-52'S AT UTAPAO WERE NOT CONFIGURED FOR SURVEILLANCE.

3. CHAO SAID THE RTG WAS QUITE DISTURBED ABOUT THIS
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POSSIBILITY, AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE MFA UNDERSTANDING WAS THE

OUR MILITARY FORCES IN THAILAND WERE FOR USE ONLY IN THE INDOCHINA CONTEXT.

4. IN ORDER TO FURTHER RELIEVE RTG FEARS, WE WILL FURNISH CAHO A COPY OF THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS BRIEFINGS, WHICH MAKES THE POINT THAT WE WOULD UNDERTAKE NO SUCH MOVE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH THE RTG.

5. THE UNCLEASSIFIED TEXT OF THE NATION ARTICLE FOLLOWS:

"IF B-52 BOMBERS ARE NEEDED FOR THE SURVEILLANCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN, THEY WILL FLY FROM THAILAND, A PENTAGON SPOKESMAN SAID IN WASHINGTON ON WEDNESDAY.

"HE SAID B-52 SUPERFORTRESSES WILL NOT BE STATIONED IN DIEGO GARCIA, A BRITISH-OWNED ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WHICH THE US IS CONVERTING INTO A MILITARY BASE, IN ORDER TO COUNTER THE SOVIET FLOTILLA ALREADY PRESENT THERE.

" THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE DEFENCE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERED BUT THEN REJECTED STATIONING HEAVY BOMBERS ON THE ISLAND TO SURVEY THE INDIAN OCEAN.

"DEPUTY DEFENCE SECRETARY WILLIAM CLEMENTS AND JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF CHAIRMAN ADMIRAL THOMAS MOORER TOLD THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY THAT EXPANSION OF FACILITIES ON THE ISLAND WOULD ALLOW B-52'S TO LAND.

"LATER, HOWEVER, THEY SAID THAT B-52'S COULD NOT LAND."
KINTNER

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